

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016



Better Planning, Better Transportation



KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Kern Council of Governments is a state-designated regional transportation planning agency and federally recognized metropolitan planning organization comprising elected officials and selected representatives from Kern County and the cities of Arvin, Bakersfield, California City, Delano, McFarland, Maricopa, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Taft, Tehachapi and Wasco through a joint powers agreement.

Kern COG sets transportation priorities, selects projects and distributes state and federal monies to its members to maintain, repair and support operations of local roadways, public transportation and other transportation systems. The agency works with Caltrans to plan, select and construct major highway projects.

Kern COG also offers its members various services such as computer modeling and support, data gathering and population projections, as well as assistance applying for federal and state funds. The following is a summary, by section, of the agency's major activities during fiscal year 2015-2016.



**Kern Council
of Governments**

Better Planning. Better Transportation.

MEMBER AGENCIES & REPRESENTATIVES



Jennifer Wood

Kern COG Chairwoman
California City

Arvin	José Flores
Bakersfield	Bob Smith
California City	Jennifer Wood
Delano	Rueben Pascual
Maricopa	John Wilke
McFarland	Manuel Cantu
Ridgecrest	Mike Mower
Shafter	Cathy Prout
Taft	Orchel Krier

Tehachapi	Philip A. Smith
Wasco	Cheryl Wegman, Vice Chair
Kern County	David Couch
Kern County	Zack Scrivner
Caltrans	Gail Miller
GET	Cindy Parra
Joint Planning	Scott Kiernan
Policy Board	

STAFF

Administration

Ahron Hakimi /Executive Director

Angelica Banuelos
Administrative Assistant

Susanne Campbell
Regional Planner

Laurie Collins
Executive Secretary

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Regional Planner

Rebecca Napier
Regional Planner

Greg Palomo
Financial Services Officer

Robert Phipps
Director of Administrative
Services

Tami Jones
Office Services Assistant

Fasika Stowe
Administrative Assistant

Linda Urata
Regional Planner

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Robert Snoddy
Regional Planner

Joe Stramaglia
Regional Planner

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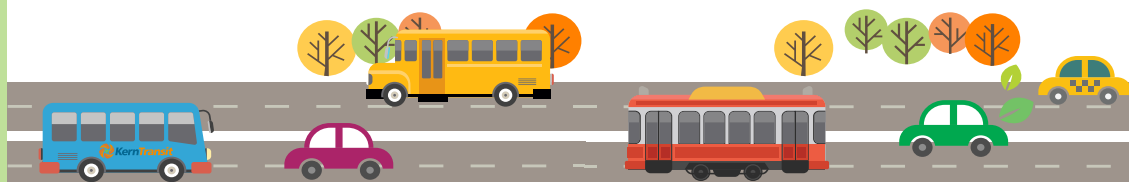
Technical Services

Rob Ball | Planning Division Director

Ed Flickinger | Regional Planner

Vincent Liu | Regional Planner

Ben Raymond | Regional Planner





2018 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Kern Council of Governments kicked off its long-range, 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) on Dec. 16, 2015, when it held its first Environmental and Social Equity Roundtable meeting.

The 2018 RTP is a master plan of capital transportation projects for the entire Kern region spanning 20 years. Any proposed project that relies on federal funding must be included in the document.

Roundtable members reviewed the methodology Kern COG uses to designate Environmental Justice (EJ) areas and federal Title VI areas in Kern County. Environmental justice refers to the process of ensuring both the benefits and burdens of public infrastructure are shared equally across socioeconomic and geographic ranges.

A second Environmental and Social Equity Roundtable was held on March 10, 2016, during which participants agreed that the best option was EJSCREEN, a software program recommended by the Federal Highway Administration.

The first Business and Industry Roundtable was held June 8, 2016 to provide an overview of the 2018 RTP process and also to discuss

with stakeholders the I-5/Sustainable Freight Program being developed by consultant Cambridge Systematics.

Cambridge Systematics presented Existing/Future Conditions and Critical Locations for freight movement on I-5 within Kern County. Participants from Frito Lay, the City of Bakersfield, California Transportation Association, Tioga, Tejon Ranch and others provided their feedback.

Also, in anticipation of the 2018 RTP, Kern COG has updated its Regional Growth Forecast, a long-range projection for countywide population. The population totals, by community, are used to develop housing, employment, school enrollment and income forecasts.

The forecast is used for local transportation and air quality planning as well as by municipalities and County of Kern officials for a variety of long-range planning activities. The forecast revision will serve as the growth assumption for the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.



This senior housing project in downtown Bakersfield was partially funded by the State Cap and Trade program

REGIONAL HOUSING PLANNING PROCESS

Saves Local Government Resources/Promotes Affordable Housing For All

The Kern region is expected to add nearly 68,000 more households by 2023, a 29 percent increase in homes. Providing for a greater mix of housing types throughout the region while increasing total housing stock is one of the three objectives for Kern COG's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Plan adopted back in 2014.

In addition to the plan, Kern COG created a housing data book with data pre-approved by the state to streamline development and adoption of housing elements in Kern. That effort has paid off by saving Kern COG's member jurisdictions thousands of dollars in consulting costs that normally would have been developed piecemeal for each community.



New downtown Bakersfield housing - Mill Creek zero lot line development





2016 COMMUNITY SURVEY

Results from Kern COG's 2016 Community Survey indicate that 85 percent of Kern residents are satisfied with their quality of life, the highest level yet measured by any survey from 2008 to 2016. Further, the results continue the trend of lifestyle satisfaction, exceeding 80 percent each year since 2011.

Looking ahead to the next 20 years, 41 percent of residents surveyed think the quality of life in their city or town will be "much better" or "somewhat better," while 27 percent think it will "stay about the same" and 27 percent think it will be "somewhat worse" or "much worse." This is a return to almost the same level as in 2012 (42 percent).

In an open-ended format, the "small town atmosphere" continues to be the thing that respondents cited as liking most about where they live (41 percent) and cost of living as a positive has increased (27 percent). Contrastingly, "air quality" remains the thing they liked least about their city or town (31 percent).

The 1,208-person random telephone and online survey examined attitudes about community growth, transportation habits, housing,

bike and pedestrian matters and other quality-of-life issues throughout Kern County. The demographics included 654 San Joaquin Valley residents from Arvin, Bakersfield, Shafter, Wasco, McFarland and Delano; and 554 responses from western Kern, eastern Kern and the mountain communities. The margin of error for the 2016 survey was plus or minus 2.82 percent.

The 2016 survey assessed 21 issues for improving quality of life in Kern County, including: economic vitality and equitable services; community assets and infrastructure; transportation choices; conserving undeveloped land and natural resources; providing a variety of housing choices and; services and public safety.

Godbe Research of San Mateo conducted the community survey from April 5 through April 18, in both English and Spanish depending on the preference of the respondent. The respondents were selected using random sample of voter file numbers, matched to update cell phone numbers and email addresses, and a listed sample of Hispanic residents, which insures that all residents are represented.



2015-2016 • SHORT-RANGE PLANNING

THOMAS ROADS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



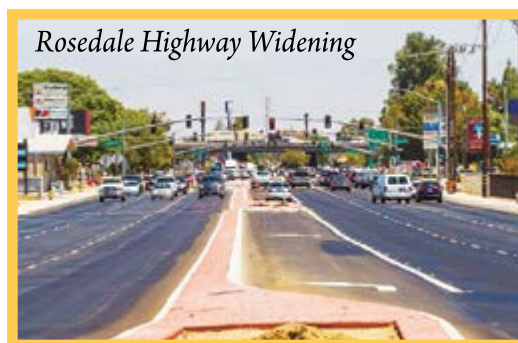
With the State Route 178/Morning Drive Interchange and the State Route 99/Hosking Avenue Interchange projects opened to traffic last year, the Thomas Roads Improvement Program (TRIP) continued to move forward in 2016, improving circulation in their respective areas. Of the eight remaining projects, four are under construction and four are in the final design process.

The first segment of Rosedale Highway Widening project, between Mohawk and Gibson streets, is now operating with three lanes in each direction. The remainder of the project, from Calloway Drive to Mohawk Street, is expected to open for traffic in fall 2016.

Construction began on the nearby Southbound State Route 99/Rosedale Highway Off-ramp project in early 2016. This project adds a southbound auxiliary lane to the freeway and widens the off-ramp. Two retaining walls are being constructed and the first wall is complete. Project completion is anticipated in early 2017.

To the east of Bakersfield, new pavement has been placed on the north side of State Route 178 and traffic has been shifted to the north so widening work can proceed along the south side of the highway. The Cantabria Drive, Alfred Harrell Highway and Miramonte Drive

intersections have undergone improvements and a new retaining wall is being built adjacent to the Mesa Marin Sports Complex. A new alignment for State Route 184 has also been constructed and paved.



Rosedale Highway Widening



Hosking Avenue Interchange

Beltway Operational Improvements along State Routes 99 and 58 -- TRIP's largest construction project to date -- include new retaining and sound walls; auxiliary lanes; interchange ramp improvements; and widening the P Street and Madison Street bridges, as well as the Bakersfield Corral railroad overhead. The project will also include a new bridge for traffic moving off the State Route 99 to State Route 58 connector ramps to eastbound State Route 58.

The Centennial Corridor Project, which will connect State Route 58 with the new Westside Parkway, completed the environmental process last year and has moved into final design. Centennial Corridor right-of-way is 84% purchased and demolition of City-owned properties is under way.

The Hageman Flyover, Truxtun Avenue/Oak Street Intersection Operational Improvements and the 24th Street Improvement Project are also under final design. All of these projects, as well as the Centennial Corridor, have reached or surpassed 65 percent design completion.



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

The County of Kern along with the cities of Bakersfield, McFarland and Tehachapi received more than \$5.7 million through a combined state and federal transportation grant program targeting pedestrian, bicycle, rail and public transportation projects.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopted 113 biking and walking projects statewide, collectively valued at more than \$215.2 million, as part of the 2015 Cycle 2 Active Transportation Program (ATP), making it the nation's largest such program. The ATP replaced a patchwork of small federal and state grant programs with a centralized, more comprehensive one. Evaluators focused on projects that would help satisfy the state's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions while providing viable links from neighborhoods to work or school.

From rail corridor improvements to bicycle safety programs and sidewalk projects near schools, six regional projects received winning scores from a network of volunteer grant evaluators representing local and state transportation agencies as well as non-profit organizations and advocacy groups. A full list of all Kern projects appears below. More than 75 percent of funds available will directly benefit disadvantaged communities, according to CTC staff.

AGENCY	PROJECT	AWARD
Kern Co.	Mojave Pedestrian Improvement Project	\$896,000
Kern Co.	Lamont Pedestrian Improvement Project	\$1,430,000
Bakersfield	"A" Street Improvements	\$1,055,000
McFarland	Kern Avenue Elementary Safe Routes to Schools	\$293,000
Tehachapi	Rail Corridor Pedestrian Safety Project	\$2,042,000
Kern COG	Kern Regional Active Transportation Program Plan	\$250,000

"If you look at the full list, Kern County is very well represented. This is great news for the entire region," said Bakersfield City Councilman and Kern COG Board member Bob Smith. "Collectively, we submitted some outstanding projects that were recognized for their potential to move people without getting in a car."

District 2 Supervisor and Kern COG Board member Zack Scrivner applauded the projects in Mojave and Tehachapi. In Mojave, workers will build sidewalks and wheelchair accessible ramps behind existing curbs and gutters throughout downtown. Meanwhile, the Tehachapi project will include a new pedestrian crossing at N. Mill Street and pedestrian improvements at three existing crossings, along with fencing, curb sidewalk and landscape improvements along the south side of H Street.

"County and City of Tehachapi staff put together solid projects that were recognized not just for their benefits to pedestrians but also for the economic boost it will provide by creating a more tourist-friendly environment," he said.

In addition to those projects the CTC awarded on Wednesday, regions throughout the state received a portion of funds based on population formulas. Kern COG expects to award an additional \$3.6 million in ATP projects in November.





PROJECT DELIVERY OVERVIEW | 2015-16

Kern COG programmed nearly \$351 million for transportation projects during 2015-2016, including \$23 million for the State Route 58 Gap Closure widening project – completed in 2015 – and anticipates construction of the Centennial Corridor in Bakersfield, a two-and-a-half mile freeway project to connect existing State Route 58 east of State Route 99 to the now-completed Westside Parkway.

Thomas Roads Improvement Program projects account for \$175 million, or 49 percent, of the \$351 million in Kern COG's 2015 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), a short-range programming document that anticipates up to five years of transportation projects using federal, state and local funds. About \$234 million comes from federal and state fuel taxes while the remaining \$117 million are local revenues.



Morning Drive Interchange



State Route 58/99 Operational Improvements



State Route 58/99 Operational Improvements

Several regional projects were under construction or completed in the 2015-16 fiscal year. They include:

- Westside Parkway – New Freeway in Bakersfield – Phase 6 – completed in 2015;
- State Route 58 - Widening – In Bakersfield from Cottonwood Road to SR 99 – completed in 2015;
- State Route 178 - Construct New Interchange at Morning Drive – completed in 2015
- State Route 58 & 99 – Construct Operational Improvements – under construction
- State Route 58 – Rosedale Widening –under construction; and
- State Route 178 Widening of the existing roadway – under construction.

Other Countywide Transportation Expenditures in 2015-16

Nearly \$13 million in federal aid was dedicated to local streets and roads rehabilitation while nearly \$101 million was programmed for maintenance and safety projects on the state highway system.

- \$11.3 million – 17 air quality-related / transit projects;
- \$12.6 million – 14 local street and roads rehabilitation projects;
- \$8.1 million - 16 pedestrian and bicycle-related projects and;
- \$101 million - 17 state highway-related safety and maintenance projects.

Project details for projects of regional significance and other local projects may be found at:

http://www.kerncog.org/images/docs/progress_report_201607.pdf;

<http://www.kerncog.org/federal-transportation-improvement-program>; and

<http://www.bakersfieldfreeways.us/ConstructionActivity.htm>



COMMUTEKERN | RIDESHARE 2015-2016

More than 1,200 commuters pledged to rideshare at least one day during the week to help save money, reduce traffic headaches and clean the air during Rideshare Week in October 2015 through Kern COG's CommuteKern program.

During Oct. 5-9, CommuteKern encouraged commuters to try sustainable transportation such as carpooling, vanpooling, riding the bus, bicycling, walking and telecommuting just one day for an opportunity to win some fun prizes. For the first time, electric vehicles were added in the mix of alternative transportation options.

Approximately half of all participants continue to rideshare after their pledge has ended.

Also in 2015-16, CommuteKern staff attended more than 27 outreach events throughout the county, talking to local businesses and community organizations about the importance of sharing alternative commute strategies.

CommuteKern offers presentations, marketing materials and fun activities to help promote the importance of ridesharing throughout our county, including a free, web-based, ridematching service at commutekern.org to help link people going in the same direction each day. Businesses throughout the county are now doing their part by promoting ridesharing as an alternative to battling traffic and parking frustrations that commuters face as the region continues to grow.

CommuteKern's database is a resource of local businesses that offer incentives to their employees who rideshare. The commute calendar enables employers to run regular reports and see how much they are helping to reduce their carbon footprint for daily work commutes. Local colleges and universities are using this tool as well to help introduce students to alternative transportation options available for their commute to classes each day.

Staff continues to host quarterly "lunch and learn" events for our region's largest employers (100 employees or more) to assist with employee trip reduction requirements from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Various topics at these events included introduction of the new Amtrak schedule, the ease of developing vanpool services, and bicycling events throughout the county to promote May as Bike Awareness Month. Attendees are pleased to see the variety of services available to them in their effort to make our communities healthier.



COMMUTEKERN

Because You're Going Places!



Snider's Cyclery donated a bicycle as grand prize for Rideshare Week 2015



Susanne Campbell sharing information about CommuteKern





SEE AND BE SEEN

Bike and Pedestrian Safety Video



A new, Kern COG-produced video implores motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians to “see and be seen” when in traffic to avoid life-threatening accidents.

According to the Transportation Incident Mapping System, in 2013 Kern County experienced 222 pedestrian accidents with 33 fatalities. Accidents involving bicyclists for that year – the most recent data available – were at 154 with no fatalities.

Kern COG partnered with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Coalition and local law enforcement to produce the public service campaign, including a ten-minute video asking everyone to be more aware.

The video was produced in three segments: bicyclist education, pedestrian education and driver education. Schools, nonprofit agencies and businesses alike are invited to use this free video as a tool to remind drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians about the importance of sharing the road and following the safety laws through easy-to-read visual cues.

Kern COG’s “See and Be Seen” video can be viewed at kerncog.org under “Air Quality Improvement Projects.”

KERN 511 TRAVELER INFORMATION SERVICE

Kern 511 is a free traveler information service that offers the public traffic conditions, transit information and roadwork information in the Kern County area via website. Just call 511 or visit kern511.org to check real time traffic speeds, find traffic alerts, plan a trip on a bus or train, and even find a carpool or vanpool partner.

The 511 website and telephone number provides Kern area highway traffic information and highway speeds and will also detail road construction, traffic alerts or accidents ahead. Incidents, accidents, road closures, lane closures, traffic speeds, and live cameras can all be viewed on the interactive map. Click on highway segments to view estimated travel times and other information using a handy legend at the bottom of the page.

Real-time information on incidents, construction and travel times is provided through the California Department of Transportation’s Highway Information Network and Navteq, a company providing fleet data.

Kern 511 is also your source to find a transit provider in Kern County, train information in the San Joaquin Valley, neighboring 511 websites, rideshare information, and more. Simply click on “Resources” to access information.

Kern Council of Governments also acts as the Kern Motorist Aid Authority, which funds Kern 511 and the regional call box program through a \$1 charge on vehicle registration fees.





LITTER REMOVAL

Through \$200,000 in grants provided by the Kern Motorist Aid Authority (KMAA) in 2015-16, the City of Bakersfield and the Kern County Sheriff's Department have been working to clean up state highways and freeways throughout the region with some startling results.

With \$150,000 in financial support, two crews of six workers working five days per week, six hours per day provide safety-related hazard and obstruction removal on Caltrans ramps in Metro Bakersfield.

Sal Moretti with the City of Bakersfield Solid Waste Division told the Kern COG Board that his department has a total of 10 crews working in the program. Since the inception of the hazard and obstruction removal program, 202 people from the Bakersfield Homeless Center have

been employed, 167 children and spouses affected and 97 families have moved out of the Center into permanent housing.

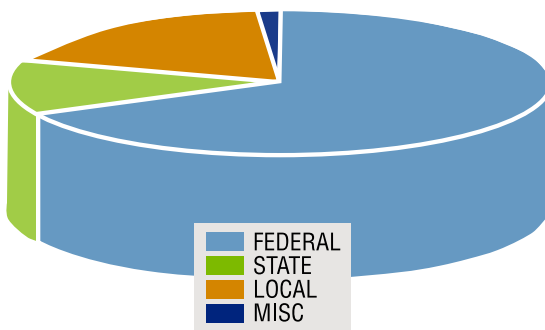
The Kern County Sheriff's Department, through another KMAA contract, used an inmate work crew to provide hazard and obstruction removal on state highways. During 2015-16, the inmate crew has been to 172 different job sites and helped beautify 410 miles of Kern highways. Target areas during the past year included: Arvin, Bakersfield, Buttonwillow, Delano, McFarland, Lost Hills, Shafter, Taft, Wasco and Frazier Park.

As state transportation funding has diminished over the past decade, traditional litter removal programs in Kern County that rely on state or county inmate labor have been severely curtailed. The City of Bakersfield, Caltrans and the Kern County Sheriff's Department have been working together to help fund hazard and obstruction removal in all of Kern County.



BUDGETED REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

REVENUES		
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	% of TOTAL
Federal	\$3,473,069	68.46%
State	\$465,000	9.17%
Local	\$1,038,369	20.47%
Misc	\$96,841	1.90%
Total	\$5,073,279	100%



EXPENDITURES		
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	% of TOTAL
PERSONNEL	\$2,652,254	56.07%
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$1,492,366	31.55%
SERVICES & SUPPLIES	\$534,708	11.30%
CAPITAL	\$51,000	1.08%
Total	\$4,730,328	100%





CHANGE IS IN THE AIR!

Zero emission light-duty cars, medium duty delivery trucks and heavy duty buses offer hope for air quality and the economy but create some anxiety for consumers who may fret over a new technology and the maximum range the vehicles will travel.

In 2015-16, Kern COG began an inventory of electric vehicle charging stations throughout Kern County and to find incentive funding and grant programs to pay for additional charging infrastructure.

Kern COG's Board of Directors approved promoting advanced transportation technologies in public and private fleets and infrastructure operations throughout the Kern region to address emissions, promote sustainable travel modes and maximize system efficiency. Specifically, the goal is to address the lack of a widely available network of electric vehicle charging stations.

According to the U.S. Census 2014 data*, nearly a quarter of a million commuters (245,409) in Kern County could travel to work in an electric vehicle (EV) given the range of most EVs. Workplace charging extends the distance a commuter can drive to and from work in an EV, or replaces battery usage from running an air conditioner, and allows commuters the opportunity to take trips during the work day or between work and home.

Public charging stations are also helpful for visitors to hospitals, retail establishments, hotels and restaurants for instance or for travelers passing through the region. One local blood bank offers EV charging to donors who schedule an appointment in advance.

Kern COG staff are working with local governments to identify projects eligible for incentive programs and grant opportunities as they become available. Other activities include a National Drive Electric Week Ride and Drive event in Bakersfield in September 2016 and as many as three workshops covering topics like workplace charging, incentive and funding opportunities, or "Ride-and-Drive" events.

Workplace charging of a different sort could also benefit electric bicycle riders.

An eBike starts at about \$1,500 and typically gets about 18 miles of range, which can be improved through manual "pedal power." Staff will manage an EV charging space tracker to measure progress toward a goal of 4,000 charging spaces by 2025.



TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT — ARTICLE 3 PROGRAM

Kern COG awarded nearly \$800,000 in 2015-16 for bicycle and pedestrian travel facilities, parking and safety programs in Bakersfield, Wasco, McFarland and unincorporated Kern County.

Bakersfield will spend \$138,000 for a Class III bike lane on Brundage Lane from Oak Street to Fairfax Road and a Class II facility on "A" Street from the city limits to California Avenue. In addition, work continues in Bakersfield on installing countdown heads on street signals, as well as design work on constructing bicycle lanes in various locations in the southwest.

Kern County was awarded \$100,000 to improve sidewalks on both sides of Niles Street from Mt. Vernon to Crestmont in East Bakersfield. Gaps in the sidewalks make pedestrian travel dangerous and nearly impossible for a person with limited mobility or in a wheelchair. The project will be completed in late 2016. Kern County was also awarded \$160,000 for eliminating sidewalk gaps on North

Chester Avenue from the Kern River Bridge to the Oildale town center. The project will also be completed in late 2016.

Wasco staff will build sidewalks on Griffith Street from Poso to 7th Street with \$50,000, improving pedestrian safety and convenience. The project is expected to be completed by 2017.

Several cities were also awarded funding for bicycle parking. Bakersfield staff used \$12,000 to install bike racks at many locations in downtown Bakersfield. Wasco and McFarland will each use their \$3,000 allocation to buy and install racks in public locations throughout the cities.

Kern COG administers the Transportation Development Act Article 3 Program (Article 3) which provides funding for non-motorized projects from a small set-aside of sales taxes in Kern County. In 2015-2016, \$792,604 was available. Six local jurisdictions submitted applications for the competitive process, requesting \$1.68 million to construct 20 proposed projects.





GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Since 1990, Kern COG has been working to integrate Geographic Information System (GIS) tools into the region's transportation, land use and air quality planning efforts. GIS transcribes data, such as demographic information, onto maps for easier visualization.

Beginning in 1994, Kern COG has administered the Kern Geographic Information Network (Kern GEONET). This organization coordinates local government GIS efforts to reduce duplication of effort among agencies through data sharing and coordinated data development. Recent projects include online GIS mapping websites at the City of Bakersfield, Kern County and Kern COG.

Kern COG fosters local government use of geospatial technology through a GIS incubator program to provide technical expertise and data to smaller agencies that may lose experienced personnel. Kern COG steps in to provide maintenance and training until the local agency is ready to again take over these technical responsibilities.

GIS assistance has been provided to Delano, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Maricopa, Kern County, Bakersfield, the Kern County Water Agency and the Indian Wells Valley Resource Conservation District.

KERN DATA MANAGEMENT

As the state-designated Census Data Center for Kern County, Kern Council of Governments answered more than 800 information requests in 2015-2016, distributing social and economic data to other government agencies, private businesses and the general public.

Staff uses a variety of data sources to garner demographic information, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics, California State Department of Finance, Employment Development Department and the U.S. Census. Kern COG uses the demographic data in producing population forecasts, which are the basis for transportation planning.

Staff typically answers requests for information from simple community or neighborhood population counts to multilayered questions involving deeper analysis. Examples have included determining the population of existing and proposed library branches; projecting revenue from proposed sales tax increases to help pay for transportation funding; and helping schools and universities predict future enrollment by researching the birth rates in school areas.

Kern COG also serves as the federally designated Home Mortgage Disclosure Repository for the region. In this capacity, the agency maintains records of mortgage customers' social characteristics to ensure lenders don't refuse loans or "redline" entire neighborhoods because of racial or income considerations.

Much of the agency's information resources are available through www.kerncog.org, including links to other information sources.





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